



WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS

State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development
Office of Economic Advisors

FOR WEST CENTRAL WISCONSIN COUNTIES

BARRON, CHIPPEWA, CLARK, DUNN, EAU CLAIRE, PEPIN, PIERCE, POLK, ST. CROIX

February 2004

Rising unemployment follows seasonal trends

Seasonal lay offs added more residents to the number of unemployed in January, resulting in an increase in the unemployment rate in each of the nine counties in the region. The unemployment rate for West Central Wisconsin rose from 5.4 percent in December to 6.8 percent in January. That included the increase in the unemployment rate for the Eau Claire-Chippewa

metro area from 4.7 percent in December to 5.9 percent in January, not seasonally adjusted.

Statewide, all 72 counties reported an increase in unemployment from December to January, pushing the Wisconsin unemployment rate up from 4.8 percent to 6.0 percent, not seasonally adjusted. Seasonally adjusted the Wisconsin rate declined from 5.2 to 5.0

percent.

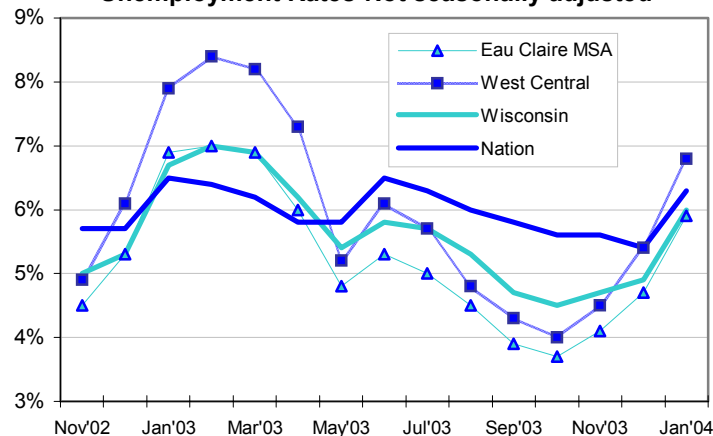
Even though unemployment rates increased in the nine west central counties during the last month, the number of unemployed in the region was down from one year ago in nearly every county and the number of employed was up.

In the Eau Claire metro area the total labor force in January included 81,800 employed residents and 5,140 unemployed. That includes an increase of nearly 1,000 unemployed residents and a reduction of 2,200 from the count of employed since December. The difference indicates that nearly half of those who lost a job in January did not remain in the labor force. In fact, the labor force was reduced by 1,300 participants which is very typical in January. The loss this year is even less than the reductions recorded in the late 1990s.

The reductions also occurred in the rural counties but to a much lesser degree. There the labor force declined by 900 participants when the number of employed dropped by 2,500 but the number of unemployed increased by 3,400.

Most of the job reductions in

Unemployment Rates-Not seasonally adjusted



	Nov '02	Dec '02	Jan '03	Nov '03	Dec '03	Jan '04
Eau Claire MSA	4.5%	5.3%	6.9%	4.1%	4.7%	5.9%
West Central	4.9%	6.1%	7.9%	4.5%	5.4%	6.8%
Wisconsin	5.0%	5.3%	6.7%	4.7%	4.9%	6.0%
Nation	5.7%	5.7%	6.5%	5.6%	5.4%	6.3%

Civilian Labor Force Estimates for West Central Wisconsin counties: January 2004

	Barron			Chippewa			Clark			Dunn			Eau Claire Co.		
	Jan '04	Dec '03	Jan '03	Jan '04	Dec '03	Jan '03	Jan '04	Dec '03	Jan '03	Jan '04	Dec '03	Jan '03	Jan '04	Dec '03	Jan '03
Labor force	25,119	24,786	24,383	32,143	32,494	31,512	17,035	16,354	16,351	24,725	24,365	23,737	54,788	55,709	53,236
Employed	23,132	23,137	22,242	29,650	30,462	28,615	15,486	15,274	14,698	23,333	23,363	22,235	52,140	53,566	50,318
Unemployed	1,987	1,649	2,141	2,493	2,032	2,897	1,549	1,080	1,653	1,392	1,002	1,502	2,648	2,143	2,918
% unemployed	7.9	6.7	8.8	7.8	6.3	9.2	9.1	6.6	10.1	5.6	4.1	6.3	4.8	3.8	5.5
	Pepin			Pierce			Polk			St. Croix			West Central region		
	Jan '04	Dec '03	Jan '03	Jan '04	Dec '03	Jan '03	Jan '04	Dec '03	Jan '03	Jan '04	Dec '03	Jan '03	Jan '04	Dec '03	Jan '03
Labor force	3,273	3,198	3,069	21,863	21,661	21,410	23,795	23,629	23,787	39,245	38,878	38,757	241,986	241,074	236,242
Employed	2,974	2,989	2,801	20,490	20,598	19,926	21,933	22,061	21,426	36,356	36,550	35,356	225,494	228,000	217,617
Unemployed	299	209	268	1,373	1,063	1,484	1,862	1,568	2,361	2,889	2,328	3,401	16,492	13,074	18,625
% unemployed	9.1	6.5	8.7	6.3	4.9	6.9	7.8	6.6	9.9	7.4	6.0	8.8	6.8	5.4	7.9

Industry Employment Estimates for West Central Wisconsin: January 2004

(Employment in thousands)	Barron			Clark			Dunn			Pepin		
	Jan '04	Dec '03	Jan '03	Jan '04	Dec '03	Jan '03	Jan '04	Dec '03	Jan '03	Jan '04	Dec '03	Jan '03
Total Nonfarm	20.8	21.3	20.6	9.9	10.0	9.7	16.3	16.6	16.0	2.0	2.1	2.0
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.1	0.2	0.1
Manufacturing	6.0	6.0	6.2	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.1	2.1	2.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Trade	3.4	3.5	3.4	1.3	1.3	1.3	2.7	2.8	2.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Transportation & Utilities	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	1.7	1.8	1.8	0.1	0.1	0.1
Financial Activities	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.1
Education & Health Services	2.2	2.2	2.2	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.4	0.3	0.3	0.3
Leisure & Hospitality	1.5	1.6	1.5	0.8	0.7	0.7	1.4	1.5	1.3	0.1	0.1	0.1
Info/Prof. & Bus.Serv./Other	1.6	1.6	1.5	0.7	0.7	0.7	1.2	1.2	1.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Total Government	4.5	4.6	4.4	2.1	2.2	2.1	4.6	4.6	4.8	0.5	0.5	0.5
	Pierce			Polk			St. Croix			Eau Claire MSA		
	Jan '04	Dec '03	Jan '03	Jan '04	Dec '03	Jan '03	Jan '04	Dec '03	Jan '03	Jan '04	Dec '03	Jan '03
Total Nonfarm	9.3	10.3	10.1	14.3	14.7	14.3	26.0	26.7	25.5	74.6	78.3	73.8
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.6	1.5	1.7	1.3	2.9	3.2	2.5
Manufacturing	1.0	1.1	0.8	3.6	3.7	3.8	5.1	5.2	5.4	10.9	10.9	11.1
Trade	0.8	0.8	1.1	2.1	2.2	2.1	4.4	4.4	4.2	13.1	13.3	12.5
Transportation & Utilities	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	1.1	1.1	1.0	2.3	2.9	2.7
Financial Activities	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.1	1.1	1.0	3.7	3.7	3.5
Education & Health Services	1.1	1.1	1.1	2.0	1.9	1.9	2.8	2.9	2.7	12.6	12.6	12.3
Leisure & Hospitality	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	2.9	3.0	2.7	7.1	7.2	7.2
Information/Prof. & Bus.Serv.	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.4	1.5	1.4	3.6	3.6	3.5	7.7	7.9	7.7
Other Services	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	3.8	3.9	3.7
Total Government	3.1	3.7	3.8	2.6	2.7	2.6	3.5	3.7	3.6	10.5	12.7	10.6

Current month preliminary. Estimates based on March 2003 benchmark. Summing from unrounded numbers.

January occurred in government and were primarily associated with school holidays, especially in university counties. In Dunn County, however, government employment increased in January as changes in education employment there typically lag the rest of the region.

Throughout West Central Wisconsin there were 3,300 fewer government jobs in January. Most of these reductions are very temporary. There were also 1,000 fewer construction jobs, 800 fewer transportation jobs, 600 fewer jobs in wholesale and retail trade, 500 fewer jobs in leisure and hospitality, 500 fewer jobs in information, professional-business, and other services, and 150 fewer jobs in manufacturing. All industries except financial activities lost jobs.

Many of the residents who lost their job in January filed a claim for unemployment compensation



benefits. There were 3,667 metro residents, an increase of 896 from December, and 5,379 rural county residents, up 1,486, who filed a claim for unemployment compensation during the survey week in January. Those numbers decline in the metro area in February but rise in the rural counties.

With the release of January 2004 employment estimates comes the revision of all preliminary estimates for 2003. The revised estimates, included in the above table, are generally lower than the preliminary estimates release during 2003.

The revisions for 2003 brought a reduction of over 1,360 jobs in West Central Wisconsin and occurred in every county. Nearly one-third of the revision occurred in leisure and hospitality employment.

The greatest source of employment information for the monthly estimate is the payroll report submitted by employers covered under Wisconsin Un-

Also revised: The list of Labor Surplus Areas for procurement bids from Oct. 1, 2003 - Sept. 30, 2004 now includes rural Chippewa, Clark and Polk counties.

employment Insurance law. The department receives these reports only after the quarter ends, however. Once each year the nonfarm estimates are revised to reflect the payroll reports.

The current estimates are based on the reports submitted during the first six months of 2003 plus additional information provided by a survey of employers and methodologies for seasonal and temporary patterns.

2002 estimates were also revised during this annual 'benchmark' process but the differences were less significant. Anyone who tracks employment changes using this database should update their files by either contacting Beverly Gehrke (address below) or from http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/lmi/ces_industry_summaries.htm

Find the most current Labor Market Information at: WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI

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